

## Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

### Stream Snorkeling

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

We're in the heat of summer, and one thing is evident – river recreation is on the uptick this year. Why not add a new dimension to hitting the water?

We think of snorkeling as a tropical, saltwater pastime, but there's no reason we can't bring it to freshwater, and there's no better place than the rivers of the Southern Appalachians. The southeastern United States is a global hotspot of aquatic biodiversity, and the southern Appalachians are a key part of that. Aquatic biologists have long snorkeled rivers as a means to keep tabs on freshwater mussel populations and for laypeople, snorkeling provides a whole new way to view and enjoy wildlife.

Most river snorkeling requires only a swim suit and a snorkel with a mask, however you may want to consider water shoes or sandals, and even a wetsuit for our chilly streams.

Where to go? Rivers on National Park and National Forest Lands are a good start. That the area around these streams is protected helps ensure both clear water for viewing and higher water quality. When hitting the water, make sure you're following rules for the site you're visiting, and enjoy the wildlife, but don't harm or take it with you.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.